

Minutes  
BEP Policy Meeting  
May 11, 2017  
Biggs Conference Room  
Holloway Campus

Rob Schmidtkofer opened the meeting. Introductions around the table:

Andy Kloepper, Policy Administrator  
Anthony Paolini, BVC Member  
Wayne Marsh, Chairman BVC  
Kat Botner, Public  
Gary Pizollo, BEP

Jill Morrison, DVI  
Dava Newnam, DVI

Discuss policies needing updating:

Active participation: anything needing changes/updating.

first five Rob discusses are the ones already approved

Recruitment training: changes on policy is strengthening what we already have. Review what is already stated.

Path for individual to become an operator begins with VR (individual would be recommended to go through VR program. BEP Director would review along with VR referral to ensure candidate is appropriate for BEP.)

VR would verify if additional training is needed prior to entering program (after credit check, computer skills and other testing). Should this part be added to strengthen policy.

Explanation requested

Candidates potential of abilities for working on computers i.e. JAWS, Excel, etc.

When would the need to sit with VR counselor be? VR determines if someone can become BEP operator

BEP Director shall review potential candidates and communicate with VR counselors if the candidate is acceptable

Pre-testing before interview seems to be heavy handed.

Candidates have to meet prerequisites. That would be something assessed by VR before furthering the candidate.

is this the way the policy/program is designed now?

Rob—supposed to be

Clear criteria, and is spelled out. Should be a yay or nay for each criteria. If people are not making it through criteria, should be discussed, tightened up. If i.e. credit score is borderline, should this be discussed?

Because of these situations, should revise and resubmit and this is the only addendum to resubmit. Will go along with BVC. Will not rewrite...redundant.

Nothing said about what we are looking for in a credit check

Exceptions allowed to borderline credit score? What is being looked at?

Issue may be a purveyor would care...Sysco.

How long is program until one becomes an operator? Is there time to improve credit score.

Depends on Hadley success.

This borderline issue should be spelled out more clearly.

Questioned if we had a policy about a candidate being reassessed.

Remediation for math

Read policy regarding possible remediation.

Could credit check be done like this?

No time limit on improving credit score and reapplication

Discussion on allowing VR to reassess candidate and give time to make improvements if needed...all in agreement with this.

Second issue: standardized interview for candidate should be 3 or 5 people on panel. Should there be a tie...needs a tie breaker. Five people is overwhelming interview panel...should be 3. Needs to be a formal process for breaking ties if panel is even numbered. Change can be made for tie breaker. Could be 5 total consisting of reps from VR, SLA and blind vendors. Dava thinks it should be 3. Should there be one blind vendor or implement a solution should there be a tie. Easier to use a 3 person panel. Is this conducive to future administrations? Why is VR part of the process? Should we have a "state diversified panel"? Option 1: 4 on the panel but only 3 vote. Decision to table this issue. Tie breaker would be chair of BVC, Director of DVI and Deputy Dir. Of DVI.

Next issue: demonstrate 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading, English (writing & grammar), math skills per Hadley. Hadley requires English, grammar and writing; we require math at 8<sup>th</sup> grade level. Rob wants all in synch with Hadley. We have requirements for computer skills. Also a concern to drop the 6 month waiting period for re training. Suggestion to reevaluate retesting on a case by case basis. All agree that math is a crucial element of the program. Limiting the number of times to take the math test has been removed but it seems to be conclusive that 3 times is enough. Discussion on whether VR should handle situation, if it should be a VR policy? Consistency in evaluating, hiring; not being forced to accept candidate when 60% of people have not been able to succeed in the program. Desire to see people be successful. Discussion ongoing about what to do if candidate has not been able to meet qualifications and what policy says to do.

Question asked: what would the committee deny. If a person is not hired by BEP or make it to OJT section, then they are referred back to VR. Interpersonal skills could be taught by VR. If candidate is unsuccessful, BEP Director may extend probationary period for 3 more months. Add on: additional training or other employment opportunities. BEP program manager and BVC chair would debrief director's office on results/decisions.

Emailing, JAWS, internet navigation, proficiency test, Excel, Word, keyboarding or consumer's compatible item (Apple) all need to be included in initial assessment. VR should have already tested candidate on this and certified that the candidate as proficient.

Once the above is in the policy, the candidate will not be interviewing unless he/she meets the skills.

Issue: Classroom training. If candidate has an accredited 4 year degree in lieu of Hadley for blind training (instead of taking Hadley course) the candidate would not have to take any of the Hadley course. Rob would like it changed to have the candidate trained on RSA if they have a 4 year degree outside of Hadley. Policy states that BEP may also accept proof of other accredited 4 year degree. RSA module can be taught by BEP.

Andy will send out to all. For changes, reply only to Andy. Dava recommends that for issues, a yes or no response be in the verbiage, yes or no responses as often as possible. As issues arise, policies can be changed.

Andy: page 4 credit score. 650 credit score required in order to open accounts and establish credit with suppliers.

Financial statement policy: full disclosure for Commissioner of RSA, Secretary of DHSS, DVI Director, Deputy Director, Sr. fiscal officer, fiscal admin officer, sr. acct., BEP Director, BEP Vendors (names removed), facility mgmt. as specified to each location. Gov. Advisory Council for Blind (as requested only w/ vendors names removed), BVC if requested. RSA 15 says program as a whole to be released to public. Names/numbers should be redacted. Get what we have un-redacted to an auditing firm—mutually agreed upon.

Discussion of revisions of what is to be submitted to RSA. DVI Staff as appropriate instead of naming each individual.

Grievance policy: policy has been discussed and no major issues.

Dava asks if it is strong, spelled out.

Mirrors federal language and state. BEP has not had to test it yet. Required to have a procedure in place.

Policy is not for candidates only for current licensees. Until the candidate gets a license, cannot file a grievance.

BVC could mediate and offer resolution.

Set aside of funds: policy needs to be reviewed annually (per RSA) to assure the set aside amount is appropriate.

Establishment of (unintelligible) BEP and locations: satelliting and annexation of a location.

Satellite: temporary location til a new operator can come in and take it over.

Attempting to make each business able to profit at \$35K per year.

Annex: two separate locations are combined to equal the \$35K. If a location makes less than the \$35K operator can request to annex by bidding. If a location is a satellite location, it will always be up for bid for annexation.

Dress code: detailed, clothing should be clean, neat, non-distracting, sheer or translucent are not acceptable. No flip-flops.

Accounting practices: Dates, deadlines, requirements detailed and adhered to. Draft P&Ls sent for review. Two way advisory if information is not sent/received regularly between operators, BEP and fiscal.

Third party vendors: Issues when a vendor leaves a bill behind. They are reported to OMB, BBB, GSS and may not be able to get a state contract for 5 years.

All of the above policies have come back from lawyers.

All but the last two above discussed are in DC and approved by BEP/BVC/Dep. DHA.

Questions? Any other issues?

New business: by-laws for DE Committee for Blind Vendors. Wayne says this is what we are paying Terry (Smith) for. By laws need review...elections. Must be approved by operators according to what by-laws say. Any changes must be presented to operators prior to meeting and revisions submitted w/in 30 days after.

Should contact Terry to let him know this is a question for his visit. Terry's coming June 5.

Education program for building managers interfering with machines and other sales like hot dog carts going in front of buildings.

What should be discussed next?

Policy on operators changing their payroll service? Discuss this next time. State is payroll service. If operators change payroll service, why would it be State's business? Language in DE code...complications arise. Operators should be able to choose not mandated. If an operator wants to not use the State as payroll provider, do the operators want a policy or guideline written for this? Have this ready should it arise in the future.

Table until next meeting. Applies to current/future operators. Casual/seasonal are entitled to a pension.

Have internships been discussed? Something to be discussed with VR. In recruitment policy. A summer program.

Old policies possibly needing discussion: mission reports, financial aid, dept. field inspection.  
May not need these policies anymore. List of old policies requested to be sent to operators for review.

Types of businesses would suit the program. Policy on type of businesses that would work for BEP.

Public comment requested.

Meeting adjourned.